



Dr. Edmund Stoiber, Minister President of the Free State of Bavaria

## *Netzaberg Ceremony Starts Construction of New Historical Housing Project*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- Several top U.S. Army leaders from throughout Europe and German federal and state officials gathered Friday for a monumental moment in Bavarian and U.S. Army Europe history.

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Commander Col. Brian T. Boyle welcomed German Federal Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Finance secretaries Christian Schmidt and Karl Diller, respectively, to the ceremony lauding the construction of the Netzaberg Housing Area.

The completion of the garrison's newest housing area is a win-win for the U.S. and the state of Bavaria.

For the Army, Netzaberg will house a portion of the 3,500 Soldiers and 5,000 family members who will be stationed at Grafenwoehr by early 2009 as part of the U.S. Army Europe's transformation.

For the northern Upper Palatinate, one of Bavaria's most economically challenged regions, it solidifies thousands of local national jobs and millions of dollars in commerce.

Schmidt and Diller were joined by the Bavarian governor, Dr. Edmund Stoiber (Minister President of the Free State of Bavaria), who spoke about the project's importance during the hour-long ceremony.

Stoiber said he was especially proud that despite the political and financial obstacles that had to be overcome, Netzaberg—the biggest build-to-lease project in Germany—was finally reaching fruition.

He said when the state was initially approached about helping to fund an additional 10-year lease guarantee for the housing area, the first obstacle was the restriction that “state funds could not be spent on military projects.”

Stoiber said a complicated political battle quickly ensued between the state and federal government

But ultimately, he said, “this project was so important for us that we were able to put aside our differences,” and get it approved. “It was a lot of controversy,” said Stoiber, “but we all supported one another in the end.”

The state and federal governments made an 83 million Euro each lease guarantee, notching the 10-year build-to-lease project up to a 20-year build-to-lease.

Stoiber thanked federal representatives Schmidt and Diller, who helped make the project and financial backing possible. He also said he was pleased that about 85 percent (275 million Euro) of the contracts for the Netzaberg construction was awarded to Bavarian firms, calling it “a stroke of luck” for the state’s construction industry.

IMA-Europe Director Russell Hall focused his remarks on the history of Netzaberg and the revival of a village that dates back to Celtic times. Hall also expressed his appreciation to the United States Congress, military leadership at the Pentagon, and USAREUR for their guidance and support.

Also in attendance was U.S. Army Europe Commander Gen. David McKiernan, who helped unveil the sign describing Netzaberg’s history.

The first section of more than 400 Netzaberg homes will be turned over to German and U.S. authorities in the fall of 2007. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

The housing area will consist of 830 housing units, an elementary and middle school, community center, convenience store, a day care, and youth center.



Installation Management Agency Europe-Region Director, Mr. Russell Hall signs the City of Grafenwoehr visitors book



Netzaberg Housing construction site

(Story provided by Adriane Foss, Editor, Bavarian News, USAG Grafenwoehr)